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DE RUEHRL #0322 0731623

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P 131623Z MAR 08

FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0683

INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE

RUCNFRG/FRG COLLECTIVE

RUEHDIR/IRAN RPO DUBAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 000322

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SIPDIS, NEA/IR, EUR/AGS, DRL FOR LURIE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/10/2018

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [IR](#) [GM](#)

SUBJECT: IRAN: BUNDESTAG PASSES RESOLUTION CALLING FOR FREE
AND FAIR MAJLES ELECTIONS

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Jeff Rathke for reasons 1.4
(b)/(d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On March 6, the German Bundestag passed a unanimous resolution on the upcoming Iranian parliamentary elections, calling for a free and fair campaign and free and democratic elections. Speakers from Germany's four main political parties underscored the deteriorating Iranian human rights situation, as well as the importance of dialogue with the entire Iranian political spectrum and Iranian civil society. Private discussions with two MPs indicate genuine concern about the outcome of the Majles election, with one MP, an Iranian-German, expressing regret that Iranian reformists had not taken a stronger stance following the mass disqualification of their candidates. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) The German Bundestag unanimously passed a resolution on March 6 calling for Iranian authorities to accept all candidates for the Majles, to allow a fair and free campaign, and free and democratic elections. The resolution also stated the Bundestag's desire to maintain contact not only with the Iranian Parliament, but to meet with representatives of all political parties in future encounters. The resolution, which was sponsored by four of the five political parties represented in the Bundestag, passed unanimously after limited debate.

¶3. (U) In their individual speeches, Senior Bundestag members highlighted the Iranian regime's mismanagement, its human rights abuses, and the need for continued discussion with Iranian civil society. Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Ruprecht Polenz (CDU) singled out the Iranian government's economic mismanagement and human rights violations, noting that the "foreign policy confrontation course which Iran follows is meant to distract from its internal political failure and to justify repression." Polenz added that while the Bundestag will continue its contacts with the Iranian Majles, the Bundestag must consider more carefully that the Majles does not represent the country.

¶4. (U) Rolf Muetzenich (SPD), a Foreign Affairs Committee member and chair of the German-Iranian Parliamentary Group, emphasized that the Bundestag's resolution does not interfere in Iranian internal affairs because the Iranian public itself has been debating the electoral process for weeks. Muetzenich called on the Bundestag to demand and support an Iranian Parliament that would act rationally and independently. The Green Party's foreign policy spokeswoman, Kerstin Mueller, called for both continued criticism of the difficult human rights situation as well as continued dialogue with Iranian civil society: "we must build bridges to give a chance to Iranian civil society and those who want democracy."

¶5. (C) In private discussions, Muetzenich told PolOff

(Iranwatcher) March 13 that it had been important for the Bundestag to issues a statement, particularly since there had been a similar effort for the 2004 Majles elections. He noted, however, that some Bundestag members had voiced concern that statements by a foreign parliament could make life difficult for the Iranian opposition. He added that the recent scrutiny of the meeting between Germany's ambassador to Tehran and a leading reformer (reported septel) unfortunately supported this position. Muetzenich underlined his speech's statements that Ahmadinejad does not represent all of Iran and that a diversity of opinion exists among Iranian politicians and within Iranian society. Muetzenich also warned against placing too much hope in conservatives Ali Larijani and Mohammed Ghalibaf as agents of change.

¶6. (C) On the other hand, Green MP Omid Nouripour, the Bundestag's only member of Iranian descent, voiced frustration to PolOffs on March 12 that the Bundestag resolution had not been forward-leaning enough. He noted his disappointment that Iranian reformists (and with them, the international community) had not called for a boycott of the Majles elections following the mass candidate disqualifications. Nouripour noted that the contest would boil down to which of the two most conservative factions would prevail, the Larijani/Reza'i/Ghalibaf grouping or the hardliners (which include Ahmadinejad supporters). He held out hope that the reformists would succeed in winning the relatively few seats for which they are allowed to compete.

TIMKEN JR